

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1-41. (Cancelled)

42-60. (Cancelled)

61. (Currently amended) A method for operating a food waste disposer to process food waste, the food waste disposer having a motor for imparting movement to a rotatable shaft which is coupled to a grinding mechanism, the method comprising:

automatically determining the presence of food waste in the food waste disposer; and
controllably changing the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism depending on
the presence of food waste in the foods waste disposer, including increasing the
rotational speed of the grinding mechanism if food waste is present in the
disposer.

62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently amended) The method of ~~claim 62~~ claim 61, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is increased from a first rotational speed to a second rotational speed.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, wherein the first rotational speed is between 400 and 800 revolutions per minute.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is subsequently decreased from the second rotational speed to the first rotational speed if food waste exists in the food waste disposer.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is decreased if food waste is not present in the food waste disposer.

67. (Previously presented) The method of claim 66, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is decreased from a first rotational speed to a second rotational speed.

68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 67, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is subsequently increased from the second rotational speed to the first rotational speed if food waste enters the food waste disposer.

69. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the presence of food waste in the food waste disposer is determined by a motor controller.

70. (Previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the motor further comprises a stator, and wherein the controller is in electrical communication with the stator.

71. (Previously presented) The method of claim 70, wherein determining the presence of food waste in the food waste disposer comprises using the controller to monitor a current in the stator.

72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein an increase in current indicates the addition of food waste to the food waste disposer

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 72, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is increased in response to the increase in current.

74. (Previously presented) The method of claim 73, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is increased from a first rotational speed to a second rotational speed.

75. (Previously presented) The method of claim 74, wherein the rotational speed is between 400 and 800 rotations per minute.

76. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein a decrease in current indicates the exiting of food waste from the food waste disposer.

77. (Previously presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding mechanism is decreased in response to the decrease in current.

78. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the grinding mechanism comprises a shredder plate.

79. (Previously presented) The method of claim 78, wherein the shredder plate includes grinding lugs.

80. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the motor is positioned in a motor housing section and wherein the grinding mechanism is positioned in a grinding section, and wherein the motor housing section and the grinding section are adjacent.

81. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, wherein the grinding section further comprises a stationary shredder ring.

82. (Previously presented) The method of claim 80, further comprising a food conveying section adjacent to the grinding section for receiving food waste.

83. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the motor is a switched reluctance motor.

84. (Previously presented) The method of claim 61, wherein the motor is a variable speed motor.

85-104. (Canceled)

105. (withdrawn) A method for operating a food waste disposer to process food waste, the food waste disposer having a motor for imparting movement to a rotatable shaft which is coupled to a grinding mechanism, the method comprising:

determining whether food waste is jammed in the grinding mechanism by monitoring a current provided to the motor; and
attempting to dislodge the jammed waste from the grinding mechanism by adjusting the torque of the rotatable shaft.

106. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the motor is a switched reluctance motor.

107. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the motor is a variable speed motor.

108. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the current is provided to a stator of the motor.

109. (withdrawn) The method of claim 108, wherein it is determined that food waste is jammed in the grinding mechanism by monitoring an increase in the current.

110. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the torque of the rotatable shaft is increased.

111. (withdrawn) The method of claim 110, wherein the torque of the rotatable shaft is increased from a first torque to a second torque.

112. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein adjusting the torque of the rotatable shaft comprises reversing the rotational movement of the rotatable shaft.

113. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein adjusting the torque of the rotatable shaft comprises sequentially adjusting the rotational movement of the rotatable shaft between a reverse rotational direction and a forward rotational direction.

114. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the grinding mechanism comprises a shredder plate.

115. (withdrawn) The method of claim 114, wherein the shredder plate includes grinding lugs.

116. (withdrawn) The method of claim 105, wherein the motor is positioned in a motor housing section and wherein the grinding mechanism is positioned in a grinding section, and wherein the motor housing section and the grinding section are adjacent.

117. (withdrawn) The method of claim 116, wherein the grinding section further comprises a stationary shredder ring.

118. (withdrawn) The method of claim 116, further comprising a food conveying section adjacent to the grinding section for receiving food waste.

119-144. (Canceled)

145. (New) A method for operating a food waste disposer to process food waste, the food waste disposer having a motor for imparting movement to a rotatable shaft which is coupled to a grinding mechanism, the method comprising:

automatically determining the presence of food waste in the food waste disposer; and

decreasing rotational speed of the grinding mechanism from a first rotational speed to
a second rotational speed if food waste is not present in the food waste disposer.

146. (New) The method of claim 145, wherein the rotational speed of the grinding
mechanism is subsequently increased from the second rotational speed to the first rotational
speed if food waste enters the food waste disposer.